



# Texting and Smart Phone Ergonomics

The typical mobile subscriber sends and receives more text messages than telephone calls, according to a recent trend report published by the Nielsen Company.

The posture we assume while texting and e-mailing from mobile devices—using our thumbs to type, crunched over a tiny keyboard—is unnatural. That said, it only presents problems when we do it constantly without giving our body enough breaks. The term "Blackberry thumb" has been coined by the media and medical professionals to describe this phenomenon. This typically creates pain at the base or in the muscles of the thumb or wrist. The thumbs are not made to do such repetitive tasks in such a small area.

**Use the following tips to avoid discomfort while texting or using your smartphone:**

## Tips for Texting:

- Reduce your keystrokes. More keystrokes equals more strain on your hands and thumbs—so keep your messages brief.
- When possible, take advantage of word prediction or auto complete tools which can be used on your phone.
- When selecting a device, pick one that has a full keyboard. Some models require you to tap the key twice or three times to select the letter you'd like. This increases repetition.
- Use shortcuts. Shortcuts not only help you quickly get things done, but also reduce the need to scroll. You can find these shortcuts by referring to your user manual.
- Use a neutral grip when holding the device. A neutral grip is when the wrist is straight, not bent in either direction.
- Maintain an upright posture while texting. Avoid bending your head down and rounding your shoulders.
- Rest the thumb by using alternative fingers.



## Tips for Keyboard users:

- Type using the pad of your fingertip. Avoid using the tip of your fingernails. This can create an awkward bent position for your thumb which can lead to possible discomfort.

## Tips for Touch Screen users:

- Use your phone in a vertical position while typing; this will reduce the amount of reaching space your thumb will have to cover to push a key.
- If you do have thumb or wrist pain, don't plan to compensate with a stylus or pen as touch screens are heat sensitive and will not recognize anything but a fingertip.

